

How to Make a Report

I Suspect Abuse But I Don't Have Proof. Should I report?

Only reasonable suspicion or reasonable cause to believe is enough to require a report according to the law. As a rule, when in doubt, report. Reporting is anonymous and you could be saving a life. Failure to report can result in criminal or civil liability.

If you believe abuse/neglect/exploitation is happening, don't try to investigate yourself or confront the possible abuser. Instead, report what you see to the local Department of Family Services (DFS) office or local law enforcement.

What do I do Before I Make a Report?

Document as much factual information as possible. For example, write down the time of day you witnessed the incident. Write down a description of the possible perpetrator as well as the possible victim; how many people were present; where the incident happened; if a vehicle was involved, try to get the license plate of the vehicle as well as its description.

How do I Report Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation?

To report suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation call the Wyoming Department of Family Services local field office or the local law enforcement agency in which the child or adult lives or where the alleged abuse has occurred.

How Can I Decide Whether to Report the Abuse I Suspect?

Deciding whether or not to report suspected abuse can be difficult, yet it is an important first step toward protecting a vulnerable person who might be in danger. You must have a reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect or exploitation. You might be mistaken, but it is better to err on the side of the vulnerable person. Not reporting your suspicions may mean that abuse could continue. If you make a report in good faith, you are immune from civil or criminal liability.

Will the Vulnerable Person Be Taken Away From the Home If I Report?

Only if the person is at risk of serious harm will she or he be taken away from the home. Removing the person from the home is not a routine or usual occurrence. Even if the person must be removed, the goal is to keep the family together. In Wyoming, the Department of Family Services cannot remove an alleged victim of abuse/neglect/exploitation from their home. Only law enforcement, the courts or medical personnel like doctors have that authority.

What Happens After I Report?

After receiving a valid report, Department of Family Services, Protective Services Division assesses the situation to determine if there is immediate danger to the person. If caseworkers find that maltreatment has occurred, or services are needed to prevent abuse/neglect/exploitation, there are a number of possible options. These include working out a plan with the family or caretakers - to protect the vulnerable person and to help solve the problems which are leading to abuse/neglect/exploitation.

Will My Name Be Confidential? Do I Have To Give My Name?

Reports may be made anonymously, but it helps a great deal if you give your name. Giving your name will assure that if the investigators in the case need additional clarification from you, they can contact you and that important information will not be forgotten or lost.

Your name will be kept confidential and DFS will not release any identifying information about the person who made the report. The name of the person making the report will be made known only if a court orders it or if court testimony is involved.

How Will I Know What Happens?

You may not know what happened after you make a report. However, if you continue to have reasonable suspicion or reasonable cause to believe abuse/neglect/exploitation is occurring, make another report to your local DFS office or law enforcement agency.